2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

jobs in the vineyards must be finished quickly so that the men of the household may turn to plowing cotton fields, those farmers who prefer to start plowing earlier, or who have larger vineyards than the household can handle alone, sometimes hire labor for the hoeing. Sons who are not needed on their father's land may work for others in the village or may go for several days to work for relatives living in neighboring villages. In either case, they are paid a daily wage of between forty and sixty drachmas (thirty drachmas equal one dollar) and get their board as well. It requires three man-days of labor to hoe one *strema* of vineyard. Hiring labor for this is considered expensive. Farmers with fewer land resources may, in order to avoid the extra expense, ask their wives to do some hoeing. Although such a procedure is frowned on in Vasilika, a farmer considers the practical necessities of his situation as more important than any possible loss of prestige. Moreover, village opinion itself recognizes the force of a man's practical needs, and tempers criticism to the nature of the specific circumstances. This phenomenon is characteristic of Vasilika and will be mentioned again.

The vines continue to need some attention from time to time until the grapes have ripened. Wine-making begins in September with the gathering of the grapes. September itself used to be called *triyitis* (the time of the grape harvest). It is an occasion much enjoyed, since men, women, and children all pick the grapes together, talk and joke as they do so, and eat a little of the produce besides. Four or five people can pick the yield of the two *stremata* in a few hours. The pack animals carry baskets of grapes back to the house. After making certain that there are no leaves among the fruit, the men of the household wash their feet and then trample the grapes. The must collects in shallow basins and is transferred to barrels. A sample of must from each barrel (the usual household's yield is two barrels) is taken to a chemist in town to check whether sugar or alcohol or both may be needed. Payment for this service is made according to the weight of the wine the farmer will treat as a result of the chemist's advice. Besides adding the recommended quantities of sugar and white alcohol to the must, the farmers also add enough resin to make up two percent of the contents of the barrels. Resin is sold by vendors who circulate among the villages in trucks during the wine-making season. The resin gives the wine of the Greek countryside its name, *retsina,* and its characteristic flavor. In classical times the ancient Greeks and later the Romans added resin to the must as a wine preservative. It still has this function, but to the present villagers, as to the ancients, the resinated wine has a pleasing taste and, in Vasilika, is much preferred to nonresinated wines. We once started to serve a bottled Greek nonresinated wine in our village home but we were quickly informed by our village guests that it was poor indeed, and one of our visitors left the table to go home to bring a carafe of his own superior wine. Those to whom drinking a mild form of turpentine seems unpalatable at first can develop, as we discovered, a taste for *retsina* and come to enjoy it very much.

Wheat fields are plowed and sown in the fall, in late October and early November. A farmer can plow his wheat fields with a horse or two pulling a

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

or in a regular pattern of circulation through several generations among particular sets of such groups. The control of property establishes social links between a man and his wife's relatives not only in the ways we have mentioned, but because his wife's parents and brothers and sisters have a legal and customary right to be consulted before the final alienation of dower property (Section 1418). These links last only one generation, however, so that in each generation a new network of relations between elementary families in the neighborhood develops, clustering around the management of dower properties. These matters are important because they reveal some of the economic and social structure of Vasilika and its neighborhood that is congruent with the type of relationships people, both kin and non-kin, have with each other (see Chapter 5).

One other situation occurs frequently enough in Vasilika to be worth mentioning. When a farmer has no sons to inherit his land and his house, but has a daughter, the father may acquire a man's assistance on the farm by importing a son-in-law. Such a man is called a *soghambros* in Vasilika; he is a husband who moves into his wife's household instead of vice-versa. The importation of a *soghambros* is also a solution to the problem of a young widow who has no grown sons to run the farm left by her husband and arranges a second marriage for herself with a man who is willing to work her first husband's holdings and her original dower lands. Since a *soghambros* is always a manager of, and the laborer on, property belonging to others and is expected to bring no property of his own with him, there is a slight social stigma attached to the status of Vasilika. The villagers say also that a *soghambros* is not "master in his own house." Certainly, the lot of a man who is not a master in his own house and comes as a stranger to a village where most of the other men have known each other all their lives is not a happy one. But a *soghambros* is not really dishonored by his position; the villagers, in this situation, as in so many others, recognize the practical necessities which brought about the arrangement and do not strongly condemn a man for making the best of his difficulties.

The dowry in Vasilika enters into the life of the villagers in other ways besides inheritance at marriage. It has long served as a means of upward social mobility for girls. Since, as we have seen, the marriage of a daughter is among the most important obligations of parents, the dowry comes into the consciousness of the villagers more often as a property requirement for marrying off their daughters than as a means of transmitting inheritance. When, in addition, the high value placed on upward social mobility is translated into an effort to find urban sons-in-law for one's daughters, the dowry emerges as a mechanism for increasing the social prestige of the family. Farmers are willing to give larger dowries in exchange for the great satisfaction they derive from having town sons-in-law. In Vasilika, the education of some sons has released land to add to the girls' dowries. Improved agricultural income has also enabled the farmers to give larger dowries. In the decade ending in 1959, every marriage of a Vasilika daughter whose father was in the upper half of the village's income range had been one with a man of respectable occupation who lived in a provincial town or in Athens. The husbands are tailors, small retail store-owners, or civil service workers. One young man is a photographer, another is a gymnasium

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)/963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

management, they recognized the work of their women as contributing labor value, but in the context of the dowry, they did not see the situation this way.

The villagers act and talk as if they felt that it is the obligation of men to care for women, and that the obligation is largely fulfilled by the provision of a dowry for a daughter. The provision of the dowry is thus, in a sense, an outward manifestation of masculinity. By village custom, when a father dies or is incapacitated, a girl's brothers are considered responsible for marrying her off, and they are usually expected to fulfill this obligation before they themselves marry. This point of view does not correspond with the legal requirements. In the Civil Code (Section 1496) the mother is responsible for furnishing dowries for her daughters in the event of her husband's death or incapacity. The village attitude, however, I believe, is based partly on the feeling that most women are not capable of managing their estates and on the congruent custom of appointing male guardians to manage for them until their sons are grown, but more importantly on the basic notion that the provision of dowries is a male prerogative.

The emotional overtones accompanying the dowry system may be understood as a possible shift of emphasis from one kind of expression of male honor to another. Anthropologists who have worked in Greek Cypriot villages and in shepherd communities[3] report that the males in these settlements, almost all equally poor, based their sense of manly prestige not on wealth, but on the degree of honor they achieved by the protection of the chastity of their women. It would seem as if, in Boeotia, male honor depends not only on male protection of the chastity of women but also more explicitly and obviously on the provision by the men of adequate dowries for their women. The sense of satisfaction a man gets from dowering a daughter becomes more intense and compelling because the action is also an expression of his masculinity.

The shift of emphasis can be demonstrated in the village. Among the shepherds and landless or land-poor families in the village, girls marry earlier, with small dowries and trousseaus, and acquire correspondingly less prosperous husbands. The fathers and brothers involved, and the other villagers, comment on these unions by saying that early marriages are essential because otherwise the girls might run wild and disgrace the family. In other words, then, when economic means are limited, men can maintain their honor and self-respect only by protecting their women, and this becomes the paramount concern. The villagers seem to recognize that when there is no hope for even the modest degree of economic security and material well-being that the dowries of Vasilika's landowning farmers can provide, there is less impetus for the girl herself to remain virtuous or for her prospective suitors to respect her situation without the added emphasis on physical retaliation by her menfolk. However, flamboyant behavior and clandestine affairs could destroy the hope of a decent marriage for a girl whose father can provide a reasonable dowry. Or such actions might require an exorbitant dowry to overcome the effects of her bad reputation. For these girls, the rewards of waiting are great enough for them to be willing to postpone both

[3] John Peristiany and John Campbell, respectively.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

583 marriage and affairs, so that there is less danger that they will allow themselves to be compromised and less need to claim male protection.

593 Yet, with all the difficulties and sacrifices required by the dowry and [182] arranged marriage system in Vasilika, there have been very few young people [836] who have "gone to the mountains," as the villagers phrase elopements of [577] couples who have fallen in love. One or two such affairs seem to occur in each generation, at a time when the girl's male relatives are dead or not in the village; and among young people each of whose families have relatively few economic [558] resources. The subsequent standard of living of the couples has been among the lowest in the village, and the men never fully recover from the stigma of such senseless behavior, from the villagers' view. Observable examples reinforce the villagers' argument that there is no hope for a decent life without a dowry, and reinforce their admonitions to their sons to wait for properly arranged marriages and not to be *trelos* (crazy) and run off to the mountains with a girl. The admonition gains force from the further observation that if the eloping young couples have little, their children will have still less. Any man who accepts a girl without a dowry is thought to be cheating his children of their rightful inheritance from their mother.

[183] Yet, as we have had occasion to remark in other connections, the structure of marriage arrangements in Vasilika is not quite as rigid and as precise as the foregoing generalized description might imply. One Vasilika brother, in speaking of a sister who had become his responsibility after their father's death, remarked "Glory be to God (and he crossed himself) she met a man who liked her and was willing to take her with nothing but the *rukha* and what we had [533] in the house." The unexpected can happen in Vasilika, and infant girls are still dandled with songs about how their beauty will some day attract a husband without a dowry.

Family and Kin Structure

59 583 182 The foregoing discussion of family activities and of the forms of property inheritance and circulation has by implication involved questions of family structure. By giving a newly married couple property of its own to manage, the dowry serves as a mechanism to separate the newly married couple structurally from either of their two sets of parents. This is true even when the farmers bring their brides back to their fathers' households. Such patrilocal residence produces the temporary situation of a functioning, cooperative, extended, patrilineal kin group, but one that is continually aware of its distinct component elementary families. We have said temporary because there is no contemplation that the several elementary family groups concerned will live out their lives in a joint, cooperative household.

601 171 The kinship terminology used in the village is congruent with the structure underlying the realities and expectations of the situation just described. Greek terms of reference for mother, father, grandfather, grandchildren, cousin,

village culture: man must use human means toward human ends, and this is his first obligation not only to himself but to God.

In Vasilika, the same tension—the sense of a contest, of struggle, of agony, of a kind of pushing and pulling—is also a feature of a large number of encounters with other human beings. In earlier discussions I referred to the economic rivalries among families in the village and to the efforts to keep family activities private to the point where a kind of espionage is practiced by all the villagers to uncover secrets. These contests we may now understand as one manifestation of the agonistic quality of many human relationships within the village. But seemingly perpetual battles require an occasional respite; the nervous vitality which they drain must be replenished. In Vasilika, some relationships within the family seem to contribute the respite and the energy to go on fighting the battles, whereas others appear to create the sense that perpetual struggle, principally outside the family, is a part of life. The family both starts the battle and also manufactures and distributes the weapons with which to fight it.

What is the ultimate aim of the battle, if I may continue the metaphor? It would seem that each man and woman seeks for identity, for a concept of self, and given the conditions of Greek village culture and its values, the search is carried on by pitting oneself against another, or against fate. One learns to know oneself primarily by contrast with others; and therefore the maintenance of some difference is a necessity. Contrasts, and the tension contrasts create, become expected and desired. Without change and variation the villagers lose their sense of life. But the need to engage in perptual struggle is an emotional burden, especially because there must be some who lose in the contests. A man is not completely disgraced in the villagers' view, however, if he is bested in an encounter with another man, provided that he was willing to engage himself in the struggle in the first place and showed skill in his conduct of it. Just as agricultural failure is attributable to uncontrollable forces only if a man did his physical best, so failure in human relations is attributable to some other force only if a man has first made a creditable effort. It would seem that it is not the outcome but the continuing *aghonia* that gives a village man or woman the feeling that he is a functioning human being, that he has an identity, that he is alive. *"Perazmena, ksehazmena,"* "What is past is forgotten," the villagers say, and although they say so mostly in connection with unpleasantness, the saying is equally applicable to victories. For both victory and defeat are shortlived; a new area of battle constantly supersedes the old.

This struggle is not something which is entered into as a new pattern when men and women take on the responsibilities of a family, after a childhood spent without it. On the contrary, Vasilika's culture is one of those in which there is a continuity in the behavior and attitudes expected of children, adolescents, and adults. There are no sharp breaks; from their earliest days the upbringing of children plunges them into the role of agonist, and skills for functioning in this fashion are acquired in all stages of a child's development.

The villagers assume that intelligence and self-control are basic human qualities which differentiate men from animals. The villagers are in many ways